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Approaches and Principles for an Israeli Grand Strategy towards the European Union*

YEHEZKEL DROR AND SHARON PARDO**

I Crafting Israeli Grand Strategies

Israeli statecraft has had many successes, including such future-shaping decisions as declaring the independence of Israel, building the Dimona nuclear reactor, legislating and implementing the 1950 Law of Return¹ and more. In some domains, Israel has also developed good grand strategies, such as making sure that at least one major power supports Israel and that others do not oppose it actively, leading after the demise of the security cooperation with France to the special relationship with the USA.

However, in important respects Israel has been weak in developing long-term and holistic grand strategies.² Reasons include the pressure of current events, strength of ideological thinking, dogma-caused misperceptions of reality,³ and the chain of successes culminating in the 1967 Six Day War that made deeper policy-thinking apparently unnecessary, to mention only four of the main causes.

Lack of adequate grand strategies has been glaringly the case in respect to settlement policy in the territories coming under Israeli rule following the Six

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¹ The Law of Return 5710–1950 stipulates that Jews immigrating to Israel may be granted the status of *Oleh* (which automatically entitles them to citizenship unless the applicant is deemed likely to endanger public health, the security of the State or public welfare etc.).

² See: Yehezkel Dror, *A Grand Strategy for Israel* (Academon, in Hebrew, Jerusalem, 1989), ch. 3; and Yehezkel Dror, *Grand-Strategic Thinking for Israel*, Policy Papers 23 (Ariel Center for Policy Research, Ariel, 1998).

³ Strong ideological commitments can serve as motivations making achievement of the nearly impossible a reality, by ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’ dynamics. But they can also serve as reality blinders and learning inhibitors, through what has aptly been called ‘motivated irrationality’. See David Pears, *Motivated Irrationality* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1984).

Day War, policies towards the non-Jewish minorities in Israel, and policies on what to do with the Palestinian population of Gaza, Judea and Samaria. Weaknesses in grand-strategic thinking are also evidenced by policies towards Europe, as illustrated by a lack of effort to join the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) at times when this was easily possible, and nowadays by inadequate Israeli policies towards the EU.

The days when the EU could be dismissed as 'being all talk and no action' have long gone. While the final outcome of European federalism is yet to be determined, the EU today functions as a political entity and must be recognized as such. Despite the deep constitutional crisis, the EU is becoming a global political actor, and not just an economic player. Be that as it may, Israel looks to distant America and keeps its political distance from nearby Europe. Israel behaves as if it were an island in the Atlantic Ocean rather than a nation neighbouring the enlarged EU.

Yet, the EU is Israel's economic, cultural and, in many respects, political hinterland. Israel enjoys special status in the EU, a status that grants Israel extensive rights in many areas such as research and development and economics. For these reasons, one of Silvan Shalom's first public statements as Israel's foreign minister was dedicated to declaring his intention of improving relations with Europe as a leading priority.

Lack of a grand strategy towards the EU is a serious omission which can easily incur a high cost for Israel's international standing and security, as well as damage to Israel's scientific-technological, and economic development. Israel's tasks as the State of the Jewish People in acting against antisemitism in Europe⁴ and its complex relations with Jewish communities in EU Member States add to the need for a carefully crafted grand strategy towards the EU.

The need for more and better grand strategies is also pronounced in the EU, as illustrated by Turkey's EU membership saga⁵ and by weaknesses in coping

⁴ The 'new antisemitism' is a danger that requires comprehensive, multi-faceted and long-term counter-strategies. See: Yehezkel Dror, *Confronting Antisemitism: A Strategic Perspective*, Outline Strategic Paper (The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, Jerusalem, 2004); Heinrich Böll Foundation, *Europe-Israel: A Troubled Relationship: Is there a New Anti-Semitism* (Heinrich Böll Foundation, Tel-Aviv, 2003).

⁵ See European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. Recommendation of the European Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession. COM (2004) 656 final (Brussels: European Commission, 6 October 2004); Peter Ludlow, *A View From Brussels: Dealing with Turkey – The European Council of 16–17 December 2004* (EuroComment, Brussels, 2005); Michael Lake, *The EU and Turkey: A Gifting Prize or Millstone* (Federal Trust for Education Research, London, 2005); Wolfgang Quaisser and Steve Wood, 'Turkey's Road to the EU: Political Dynamics, Strategic Context and Implications for Europe' (2005) 10 EFA Rev, pp. 147–173; Angela Merkel, 'Merkel wirbt für privilegierte Partnerschaft mit der Türkei [Merkel Advocates Privileged Partnership with Turkey]', *German Bundestag*, 16 December 2004, available at <www.angela-merkel.de/ueberzeugungen/56_360.htm>, accessed 4 August 2005; Thomas Diez, 'Turkey, the European

with illegal immigration. EU policies towards Israel too are characterized by misperceptions and short-term considerations testifying to the lack of a grand strategy.

But the situations of Israel and the EU are not symmetric. The weaknesses of grand-strategic thinking in Israel on the EU are much more costly for Israel than the lack of grand-strategic thinking on relations with Israel is for the EU, though grave consequences for the EU cannot be excluded. Therefore, trying to take ‘a look from nowhere’,⁶ it is up to Israel to take the initiative in crafting a grand strategy vis-à-vis the EU, without waiting for the EU to think better about its relations with Israel.

This paper tries to help meet this Israeli need by suggesting some foundations for an Israeli grand strategy towards the EU. It does so by exploring main misperceptions in Israel and the EU, analysing deep disagreements, and suggesting some principles for an Israeli grand strategy towards the EU. Hopefully, this paper can also help the EU to develop a high-quality grand strategy towards Israel, which can advance the values and interests of both sides.⁷ But this is for EU readers to judge.

II Israeli-EU Relations

Israel and the European Community first established diplomatic relations in 1959. The two share a long history, marked by growing interdependence and cooperation. In 1975 Israel and the European Community (EC) signed their first Cooperation Agreement⁸ and since then trade, economic, political and cultural cooperation have consolidated Israel–EU relations. The EU is Israel’s most important trading partner. In the first half of 2005, 38 per cent of Israeli imports came from the EU while 36 per cent of Israeli exports were targeted

Union and Security Complexes Revisited’ (2005) 10 *Mediterranean Politics*, pp. 167–180; Meltem Müftüler-Bac, ‘Turkey’s Political Reforms and the Impact of the European Union’ (2005) 10 *South European Politics & Society*, pp. 16–30; Nathalie Tocci and Ahmet Evin (eds), *Towards Accession Negotiations: Turkey’s Domestic and Foreign Policy Challenges Ahead* (RSCAS Press, Florence, 2004); The Independent Commission on Turkey, *Turkey in Europe: More than a Promise?* (The Independent Commission on Turkey, Brussels, 2004), <www.independentcommissiononturkey.org>, accessed 6 September 2004. For the homepage of the EU’s relations with Turkey see <europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/turkey/index.htm>, accessed 27 February 2005.

⁶ Thomas Nagel, *The View From Nowhere* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1986).

⁷ Personal remark by Yehezkel Dror: I would not have dared to express such a hope but for my extensive experience of working for the EU on grand-strategic and structural issues, during my two years at the European Institute of Public Administration in Maastricht and afterwards.

⁸ See Jacques Silber and Z.M. Berrebi, ‘The 1975 Free Trade Agreement and Its Impact on Israeli Exports’ in Ilan Greilsammer and Joseph H.H. Weiler (eds), *Europe and Israel: Troubled Neighbors* (Walter de Gruyter, New York, 1988).

at the European market. The EU ranks first in Israel's imports and second in its exports.⁹

Some elements of an Israeli grand strategy towards the EU are already in place. The following are but some of the instruments which are being implemented to intensify political, economic and technological-scientific relations.¹⁰

1. *The EU–Israel Association Agreement (AA)*¹¹

Signed in 1995 and entering into force in 2000, the AA forms the legal basis for Israel–EU relations. The AA outlines the framework for regular political dialogue and aims at promoting peace, security and regional cooperation. It includes provisions for the strengthening of economic and socio-cultural cooperation on the widest possible basis, including freedom of establishment, liberalization of services, unrestricted movement of capital, and free market competition. The AA reaffirms and strengthens the free trade arrangements for manufactured goods and other industrial products. In 2003, the parties signed a new agreement liberalizing reciprocal trade for most agricultural products.¹²

2. *Israel–EU Agreements on Scientific and Technological Cooperation*

Israel is the first and only non-European country fully associated with the EU's Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development

⁹ Motty Basuk, 'Increase in Import and Export in the first Half of 2005', *The Marker*, 20 July 2005 (in Hebrew); Monthly Israeli–EU trade statistics are available on the website of Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, <www.cbs.gov.il/>, accessed 8 March 2005.

¹⁰ For an in-depth survey see: Nellie Munin, *The EU and Israel: State of the Play* (Israeli Ministry of Finance International Department, Jerusalem, 2003, in Hebrew); and The Israel–EU Forum, 'Israel's Way to the European Union', EU–Israel Forum, Tel-Aviv University and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Tel-Aviv, 2002.

¹¹ 'Euro-Mediterranean Agreement Establishing an Association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the One Part, and the State of Israel, of the Other Part', *Official Journal of the European Communities*, L147/3, 21 June 2000. The Agreement is also available on the website of the European Commission, <europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2000/l_147/l_14720000621en00030156.pdf>, accessed 1 March 2005.

¹² For further discussion of the EU–Israel Association Agreement see: Sharon Pardo and Lior Zemer, 'The Qualified Zones in Transition: Navigating the Dynamics of the Euro-Israeli Customs Dispute' (2003) 8 EFA Rev, pp. 51–75; 'Special Issue on the Association Agreement between Israel and the European Union' (2001) 114 *Israel Tax Quarterly*, (in Hebrew); Moshe Hirsch, 'The 1995 Trade Agreement between the European Communities and Israel: Three Unresolved Issues' (1996) 1 EFA Rev, pp. 87–123.

(since 1996).¹³ The Framework Programmes are a key part of the EU's strategy to create a European Research Area that effectively competes with other technology centers in North America and Asia. Israel is an active member in the EU's Framework Programmes and has proved to be a source of innovation in both basic and market-oriented research conducted in Europe.

3. *The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (also known as the 'Barcelona Process')*

Israel is a full partner in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and participates in all its programmes. Because of the state of its economy (which is on a par with those of many EU countries), Israel is not eligible for bilateral assistance under MEDA (the financial instrument of the Partnership). It has, however, been involved in a wide variety of Euro-Mediterranean regional programmes initiated under MEDA.

Israel is a peculiar participant in this regional Partnership. Politically, Israel is neither a candidate for EU membership nor an Arab state. Economically, Israel is developed and advanced well beyond other Mediterranean partners. However, while the direct economic impact of the Partnership is negligible, politically it enhances Israel's regional legitimacy.¹⁴

4. *The EU–Israel Action Plan*¹⁵

On 13 December 2004 the EU–Israel Association Council endorsed the

¹³ During the Fifth Framework Programme, Israel was involved in 623 projects and 149 of them were coordinated by Israeli partners. In 2003, the first year of the Sixth Framework Programme, 831 Israeli bodies participated in various call for proposals under the Programme. Additional information regarding Israel and the Sixth Framework Programme is available on the website of the Israel-Europe R&D Directorate for EU FP6, <www.iserd.org.il>, accessed 9 March 2005.

¹⁴ Inon Dafni, 'Economic Cooperation between Israel and the Other Mediterranean non-Member Countries (MNMCS): Vision vs. Reality', paper presented at the Third Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting, Florence 2002; for an in-depth discussion and analysis on Israel and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership see: Tal Sadeh, 'Israel and a Euro-Mediterranean Internal Market' (2004) 9 *Mediterranean Politics*, pp. 29–52; Alfred Tovias, 'Israeli Policy Perspectives on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in the Context of EU Enlargement' (2003) 8/2–3 *Mediterranean Politics*, pp. 214–232; Raffaella A. Del Sarto, 'Israel's Contested Identity and the Mediterranean' (2003) 8 *Mediterranean Politics*, pp. 27–58; Raffaella A. Del Sarto and Alfred Tovias, 'Caught between Europe and the Orient: Israel and the EMP' (2001) 36/4 *International Spectator*, pp. 61–75; Shlomo Avineri and Werner Weidenfeld (eds), *Integration and Identity: Challenges to Europe and Israel* (Europa Union Verlag, Bonn, 1999). For the EMP website see <europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/index.htm>, accessed 8 March 2004.

¹⁵ The EU–Israel Action Plan is available on the website of the European Neighbourhood

EU–Israel Action Plan within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).¹⁶ The objective of the Policy is to share the benefits of the EU's 2004 enlargement with neighbouring countries, among them Israel,¹⁷ by strengthening stability, security and well-being for all concerned. The ENP does not imply EU membership. It represents a new approach in the EU's relations with its neighbours and it is designed to prevent the emergence of new dividing lines in Europe by offering neighbouring countries closer political, security, economic and cultural cooperation.

The EU–Israel Action Plan is a political document tailored to Israel's economic and political situation: it outlines the strategic objectives of cooperation between Israel and the EU until the end of 2007. According to the Action Plan, the two parties are to intensify political and security cooperation,

Policy at <europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/Proposed_Action_Plan_EU-Israel.pdf>, accessed 8 March 2004.

¹⁶ Among the most useful documents and articles on the ENP see, European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours. COM(2003) 104 final, 11 March 2003, Brussels; European Commission, Communication from the Commission European Neighbourhood Policy: Strategy Paper COM(2004) 373 final, 12 May 2004, Brussels; European Commission, Commission Staff Working Paper. European Neighbourhood Policy – Country Report Israel {COM (2004) 373 final}. SEC(2004) 568, 12 May 2004, Brussels; for an in-depth discussion and analysis regarding the ENP see: Sharon Pardo and Lior Zemer, 'Towards a New Euro-Mediterranean Neighbourhood Space' (2005) 10 EFA Rev, pp. 39–77; Sharon Pardo, 'Europe of Many Circles: European Neighbourhood Policy' (2004) 9 *Geopolitics*, pp. 731–738; Roberto Aliboni, 'The Geopolitical Implications of the European Neighbourhood Policy' (2005) 10 EFA Rev, pp. 1–16; Raffaella A. Del Sarto and Tobias Schumacher, 'From EMP to ENP: What's at Stake with the European Neighbourhood Policy towards the Southern Mediterranean?' (2005) 10 EFA Rev, pp. 17–38; Rosa Balfour and Alessandro Rotta, 'Beyond Enlargement. The European Neighbourhood Policy and its Tools' (2005) XL/I *The International Spectator*, pp. 7–20; Nathalie Tocci, 'Does the ENP Respond to the EU's Post Enlargement Challenges?' (2005) XL/I *The International Spectator*, pp. 21–32; Dov Lynch, 'The Security Dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy' (2004) XL/I *The International Spectator*, pp. 33–43; Michael Emerson, *The Wider Europe Matrix* (Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, 2004); Fulvio Attinà and R. Rossi (eds), *European Neighbourhood Policy: Political, Economic and Social Issues* (The Jean Monnet Centre, Catania, 2004); Michael Emerson, Senem Aydn, Gergana Noutcheva, Nathalie Tocci, Marius Vahl and Richard Youngs, 'The Reluctant Debutante: The European Union as Promoter of Democracy in its Neighbourhood', CEPS Working Document 223, July 2005; Michael Emerson and Gergana Noutcheva, 'From Barcelona Process to Neighbourhood Policy', CEPS Working Document 220, March 2005; Michael Emerson, 'European Neighbourhood Policy: Strategy or Placebo?', CEPS Working Document 215, November 2004; William Wallace, 'Looking After the Neighbourhood: Responsibilities for the EU-25', Notre Europe Policy Papers, 4 July 2003.

¹⁷ For a perspective on the implications of the EU's fifth enlargement for Israel, see Alfred Tovias and Amichai Magen, 'Reflections from the New Near Outside: An Israeli Perspective on the Economic and Legal Impact of EU Enlargement' (2005) 10 EFA Rev, pp. 399–425.

introduce a significant element of economic integration, boost socio-cultural and scientific cooperation, and share responsibility in conflict prevention and resolution. The Action Plan stipulates that the EU–Israel political dialogue also focus on the adoption of measures to combat antisemitism, and on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.¹⁸ Furthermore, the economic dialogue focuses on actions to promote further liberalization of investment and trade between Israel and the EU.

The Israeli government considers the Action Plan as representing ‘great progress in relations between Israel and the European Union . . . it has brought this relationship to new heights. Israel and the European Union have a strengthened platform for dialogue and cooperation.’¹⁹

All in all, thanks to reciprocal intentions and interests by the EU and its Member States, much has been achieved, including increasing economic interaction and scientific cooperation. Israel also works quite systematically in building up relations with a variety of EU institutions and bodies, such as the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Space Agency, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, etc. And bilateral relations with EU Member States also focus in part on Israel–EU issues.

In spite of these successful instruments, however, we are of the opinion that political relations between Israel and the EU never fully recovered since the 1980 Venice Declaration.²⁰ In political matters, the positions of the EU, as supported by most of its members, have been quite hostile to main Israeli policies. This is clearly demonstrated in the sharp disagreements on the separation fence²¹ and the related Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ)²² and UN General Assembly resolutions. In this case, despite

¹⁸ Though the Action Plan uses the term ‘Weapons of Mass Destruction’ (WMD), we are of the view that the term ‘Weapons of Mass Killing’ (WMK) is more accurate.

¹⁹ Statement of the Israeli Foreign Minister, quoted by David Kriss, ‘European Neighbourhood Policy: Israel Action Plan Endorsed’, *Europe in Israel*, 75, January 2005, pp. 1–2.

²⁰ The central parts of the Venice Declaration (*Bulletin of the EC*, 6[1980], 10–11) discuss: (i) the Palestinian problem, (ii) the status of Jerusalem, and (iii) the question of the Jewish settlements. The Declaration is also available at <www.knesset.gov.il/process/docs/venice_eng.htm>, accessed 12 March 2005.

²¹ The EU is against Israel’s construction of the separation fence, claiming the move is illegal. After his July 2005 meeting with the Israeli Foreign Minister, High Representative Javier Solana declared that ‘we think that Israel has the right to defend itself but we think that the fence which will stand outside the territory of Israel is not legally proper and it also creates humanitarian problems’; quoted by Elitsa Vucheva, ‘EU Says Israeli Barrier is Illegal’, *EUobserver*, 12 July 2005, available on the EUobserver website <euobserver.com/>, accessed 13 July 2005.

²² ‘Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (Request by the UN General Assembly for an Advisory Opinion)’, *ICJ Reports*, No. 131, 2004.

the intensive lobbying by Israel, all 25 EU Member States supported the UN General Assembly Resolution condemning Israel for its construction of the separation fence.²³ This Resolution laid the groundwork for possible sanctions against Israel, though this is very unlikely.²⁴

The resolution is only one out of many manifestations of serious differences of views which cannot but damage Israeli-EU relations unless coped with on the level of a 'reframing' of basic disagreements,²⁵ rather than by case-by-case debate. To progress in this direction, a well-crafted grand strategy which assures coherent and consistent Israel decisions and actions adding up to a critical mass is essential.

III Israeli Strategic Assets vis-à-vis the EU

There is little benefit in crafting a grand strategy for actors who do not have the assets necessary for implementing it. However, this is not the case for Israel in its relations with the EU. Megalomania has to be avoided, but a sense of powerlessness is no less counterproductive. The main strategic assets of Israel for reshaping its relations with the EU are both positive, in the sense of benefiting the EU, and negative, in the sense of being capable at least somewhat to harm the EU. These are outlined, in no particular order, below:

- *The ability to influence the role of the EU in Middle Eastern affairs, in particular in respect to Israeli-Palestinian relations, which in turn have an impact on the global and regional standing of the EU.* The EU's relations with the Middle East, and in particular the EU's activities with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, are a reflection of what has been faced by the EU in gradually establishing its position in external relations and its

²³ GA/10248, 20 July 2004.

²⁴ In adopting the Resolution by a vote of 150 to 6, with 10 abstentions, the UN General Assembly also called on all UN members to comply with its obligations as contained in the finding by the International Court of Justice, which include a duty 'not to recognize the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem' and 'not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by such construction'.

In response to the European vote, the Israeli foreign ministry declared that 'Israel is particularly disappointed by the European stand. The willingness of the EU to fall in with the Palestinian position, together with its desire to reach a European consensus at the price of descending to the lowest common denominator, raises doubts as to the ability of the EU to contribute anything constructive to the diplomatic process': 'Israel: UN Vote Encourages Palestinian Terrorism', *Israel Foreign Ministry Spokesman*, 21 July 2004, available on the MFA website at <www.mfa.gov.il/>, accessed 27 July 2004].

²⁵ Applying the ideas of Donald A. Schon and Martin Rein, *Frame Reflection: Towards the Resolution of Intractable Policy Controversies* (HarperCollins, New York, 1995 reprint).

foreign policy mechanism. In other words, they mirror the EU's slowly emerging standing in the international arena;²⁶

- *The significant buying capacity of economic significance to the EU.* Israel is currently the EU's twenty-first largest export market, and ranks number twenty-eight in the EU's imports. EU imports from Israel have doubled over the past decade from EUR3.6 billion in 1990 to EUR7.9 billion in 2003. Similarly, EU exports to Israel have grown from EUR5.4 billion in 1990 to EUR11.5 billion in 2003. That same year, total trade between EU-25 and Israel amounted to EUR19.4 billion (compared to EUR24.9 billion in 2002). The trade deficit with Israel has hovered between EUR4 billion and EUR5 billion in the EU's favour since 1999;²⁷
- *The possibility to direct scientific and technological cooperation, in particular in security technologies and hi-tech, either to Europe or to other partners, especially in the USA.* Israel is one of the eight countries within the global aerospace community that has demonstrated significant technological capabilities on space programs and Global Navigation Satellite System applications, equipment, and technology. In July 2004, the EU and Israel reached final approval and agreement on the European satellite radio navigation programme – GALILEO. Welcoming the outcome of the negotiations, European Commission Vice-President Ms. de Palacio emphasized the importance of Israel's participation in the project : 'this is a very important step for Europe and for the development of GALILEO as an international programme and its future use worldwide.'²⁸

Over the years, Israel also became a close cooperating partner in security and defense for many EU Member States;²⁹

²⁶ See: Felix Neugart (ed.), 'Europe and the Middle East – Perspectives for Engagement and Cooperation', Discussion Paper of the IX Kronberg Talks, 23–25 January 2005 (Bertelsmann Stiftung and the Center for Applied Policy Research, Gütersloh, 2005); Steven Everts, *The EU and the Middle East: A Call For Action* (Center for European Reform, London, 2003); Martin Ortega, *The European Union and the Crisis in the Middle East* (Institute for Security Studies, Paris, 2003); Vassiliki N. Koutrakou (ed.), *Contemporary Issues and Debates in EU Policy: The European Union and International Relations* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2004). For a thorough analysis of the relationship between the EU and the Middle East from the early 1950s until 2001 see: Søren Dosenrode and Anders Stubkjær, *The European Union and the Middle East* (Sheffield Academic Press, London, 2002); and Panayiotis Ifestos, *European Political Cooperation: Towards a Framework of Supranational Diplomacy?* (Avebury, Aldersho, 1987).

²⁷ See <europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/israel/intro>, accessed 5 August 2005.

²⁸ European Commission, EU and Israel Seal their Agreement on GALILEO IP/04/900, Brussels, 14 July 2004.

²⁹ For example, in June 2004, a large arms deal worth over USD50 million was signed between Israel and the European defence conglomerate EADS; 'Largest Arms Deal between France and Israel Since 1967', *Besheva* (Channel 7 Radio, Israel), 17 June 2004.

- *The capacity to influence the soft power³⁰ of the USA Jewish community and its actions in respect to USA-EU relations;*
- *Potentially, the ability to strengthen and mobilize Jewish soft power in some EU countries;³¹*
- *Some influence on a number of EU countries resulting from strong bilateral relations.* Israel's bilateral relations with several individual EU Member States are much warmer than those with the EU as a whole. Relations with the Italy's Berlusconi government are exceptionally good and those with Germany are strong. Among the ten new EU members, a year after Poland joined the EU, Polish and Israeli officials are considering the Warsaw–Jerusalem relations as 'excellent'³² and Poland is one of the friendliest EU Member States to Israel. Likewise, the Czech Republic is one of Israel's strongest allies in Europe;
- *The ability to offer help and advice (whether asked for or not) to EU decision makers to better understand the Middle East.* For example, in his May 2005 visit to Israel, Cypriot Foreign Minister Yeoryios Iakovou stated that by entering the EU, Cyprus brought Israel and the Middle East closer to Europe, and that EU Member States expected his country to play a role in matters concerning the Middle East. Iakovou declared that 'they [our European partners] expect from us to be particularly interested in the problems of the area. And this is what I am doing here in Israel;'³³
- *Direct help – mainly but not only – with intelligence in coping with terror against targets in the EU.* Israel is often described as an 'intelligence superpower'. The post-11 September 2001 war on terrorism improved the intelligence cooperation between Israel and many EU Member States. European intelligence services sought Israeli advice and assistance in tracking the movements of terrorist suspects and the tracing of terrorist funds. Immediately after the July 2005 suicide bombers' attacks in London, British security officers arrived in Israel and asked for Israeli assistance in

³⁰ In the sense of Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power: The Means of Success in World Politics* (Public Affairs Press, New York, 2004).

³¹ For a discussion on ways of building and consolidating Israel's and the Jewish peoples' soft power see Sharon Pardo, 'Soft Power: A National Asset', Strategic Paper No. 2, The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, January 2005.

³² In an interview with the *Jerusalem Post*, Ambassador Krzysztof Plominski, the director of the Middle East Department of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, termed his country's relations with Israel as 'excellent'; reported by Etgar Lefkovits, 'Poland: No EU Contacts with Hamas for Now', *The Jerusalem Post*, 1 July 2005, p. 9.

³³ Excerpt from report in English by Greek Cypriot news agency CNA as reported by BBC Monitoring, 'Israel Seeks Better Ties with Cyprus – Foreign Minister', *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, 16 May 2005.

the prevention of suicide bombings.³⁴ Counter-terrorist forensic science is another area of cooperation.³⁵

Now that European forces are deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq, within the framework of building the EU's military capacity, more European armies refer to Israel's extensive battlefield experience in counter-terrorism, desert warfare and operating in hostile environment;

- *The potential ability, if pushed into a dangerous corner, to 'throw surprises at history' and cause changes in the Middle East which are bad for the EU;*
- *A hard-power spare capacity to help protect essential EU interests in the case of serious ruptures, such as in oil supplies from the Middle East.*

On a deeper level, and in significant aspects more important, are many common values and shared cultural traditions; the fundamental and unconditional commitment of the EU and its Member States to the security of the State of Israel, however differently envisaged;³⁶ intense networks of personal and professional relations; European feelings of guilt for the *Shoah*; comparable confrontation with fundamentalism; and – most important of all – a shared interest in avoiding a clash of civilizations, to improve relations between Islamic and Western actors including Israel, and to achieve at least a quasi-stable settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and, in the longer run, a peaceful and prosperous 'New Middle East'. In the words of a top-level Israeli policy-maker,

Israel and Europe share a common cultural and social heritage, similar values, and a host of shared interests in all spheres. Our close geographic proximity, intimate trade relations, and shared commitment to democratic values and institutions – as well as our mutual desire to see Israel secure

³⁴ Less than two days after the London attacks, Gloria Laycock, director at the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science, suggested to British security services that 'if the perpetrators were suicide bombers then Israel might be able to provide some expertise because there were certain patterns of behaviour which suicide bombers followed'; reported by BBC News, 'Will the Bombers Be Caught?', *BBC News UK Edition*, 9 July 2005, available on the BBC website <news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/4661523.stm>, accessed 9 July 2005.

³⁵ For an excellent account of European-Israeli security cooperation see Shlomo Shpiro and Klaus Becher, *European-Israeli Security and Defence Cooperation: Expectations and Impediments* (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Tel-Aviv, 2004).

³⁶ As was only recently declared yet again, this time by the President of the European Parliament, Josep Borrell in his speech to the Israeli Knesset: 'I wish to reaffirm Europe's commitment to, and its special responsibility for, the existence of Israel as a Jewish state and as a democracy living in security and peace with its neighbours'; Josep Borell, 'Speech By the President of the European Parliament, Josep Borell to the Knesset. DI\572297EN.doc', 27 June 2005, p. 2, also available at, <www.europarl.eu.int/president/defaulten.htm?biography>, accessed 6 August 2005.

and the Middle East transformed from a region of war and violence into one of prosperity and stability – all combine to create a fundamental unity of purpose between us. . . . These common values and interests make us natural partners.³⁷

However, many of the above Israeli assets are counterbalanced and often outweighed by EU assets which can bring about many benefits or cause grievous harm to Israel. These are too obvious to need enumeration, but they lead to a very important conclusion which seems often not to be given enough weight in Israeli policies, namely that improving relations is more of an urgent need for Israel than for the EU.

IV Getting Rid of Israeli Misconceptions about the EU

Getting rid of misconceptions is a major step in crafting a successful grand strategy. We will start therefore by mapping three major Israeli misconceptions about the EU which spoil Israeli attitudes and undermine Israeli policies towards the EU.

But, before doing so, let us explain our methodology in presenting misperceptions: Following widespread practice in international relations theory and even more so in policy discourse, where states and multi-state entities are often discussed as if they were single actors having a coherent set of interests and policies, we speak about Israeli and EU misconceptions as if talking about single, coherent and consistent actors. This is clearly incorrect, with both Israel and the EU being pluralistic democracies with many differences of opinion. Thus, parts of the left and the right in Israel have some quite different views on the EU, while in the EU, France, Germany and the United Kingdom for instance, differ in the attitudes towards Israel and its policies. However, there are dominant core positions widely shared by main policy elites and shaping most decisions. It is to these that we refer as opinions, positions and misperceptions of the EU and Israel respectively.

Moving on to Israeli misperceptions, let us start with a positive one, which therefore is all the more misleading, namely the hope, desire and expectations of joining the EU within the foreseeable future, say, the next fifty years.³⁸

³⁷ Address by Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom before the European Union Council of Ministers, Brussels, 21 July 2003, p. 2, also available at <www.mfa.gov.il/>, accessed 7 March 2005.

³⁸ We limit strategic thinking to a maximum of fifty years and less, because we are living in an epoch of ruptures in historic continuity which turns longer-range outlooks into doubtful speculations. This is far longer than the time horizons of most strategic work, which tends to be much too short-sighted. It is better to adopt a longer time frame with more uncertainty but still without being dominated by inconceivability, aided by uncertainty-coping methods,

In a recent survey of the public perceptions of Israelis towards the EU,³⁹ 70 per cent of those surveyed thought that joining the EU is either very important or important (see Table 1). An overwhelming majority, 85 per cent of the Israeli public, either supported or tend to support the idea that Israel should apply for EU membership (see Table 2).⁴⁰ In addition, following the May 2004 EU enlargement, about one fifth of the Israeli Jewish adult population reported as either having EU citizenship (6 per cent), or intending to apply for citizenship (14 per cent).

Table 1. Importance attributed to Israel joining the EU⁴¹

	Entire sample	Jews	Immigrants	Arabs
Very important	44	44	27	43
Important	26	25	45	34
Somewhat important	14	15	16	10
Not very important	9	10	9	5
Not important	2	2	2	5
Not important at all	4	4	1	3
Don't know	1	–	–	–
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: see note 41.

than to try and improve policies within a short time frame that ignores minimum live cycles of main policies and long-term possibly dismal consequences. A good introduction to coping with uncertainty applicable to long-term strategic planning, based on RAND Corporation experience, is James A. Dewar, *Assumption-Based Planning: A Tool for Reducing Avoidable Surprises* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002).

There are methods which may permit longer-range (gu)estimates. It would be worthwhile to experiment with such approaches to the subject of this paper, perhaps as a shared EU and Israeli project with additional partners. Some of the best available methods for doing so are presented in Robert J. Lempert, Steven W. Popper and Steven C. Bankes, *Shaping the Next One Hundred Years: New Methods for Qualitative, Long-Term Policy Analysis* (The RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, 2003).

³⁹ Dahaf Institute, *Israeli's Attitudes Towards the European Union* (Dahaf Institute, Tel Aviv, 2004), available on the website of the Delegation of the EU Commission to Israel, <www.eu-del.org.il/english/dahaf_second_poll_results_edited.doc>, accessed 15 March 2005.

⁴⁰ Ibid., at p. 8.

⁴¹ Dahaf Institute, *Appendix: Tables of Distributions of Responses – Israeli's Attitudes Towards the European Union* (Dahaf Institute, Tel Aviv, 2004), p. 60, available on the website of the Delegation of the EU Commission to Israel, <www.eu-del.org.il/english/dahaf_second_poll_tables_of_results.doc>, accessed 15 March 2005.

Table 2. Degree of support for Israel joining the EU⁴²

	Entire sample	Jews	Immigrants	Arabs
Support	60 (59)	60 (60)	57 (51)	57 (53)
Tend to support	25 (18)	26 (19)	26 (21)	20 (13)
Tend to oppose	5 (6)	5 (6)	11 (6)	5 (6)
Oppose	8 (14)	7 (13)	4 (17)	16 (24)
Don't know	2 (3)	2 (2)	2 (5)	2 (4)
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: see note 42.

At the political level, a number of Israeli leaders share the public's support for Israel joining the EU. In particular, a group of Israeli Knesset members signed a manifesto in 2002 advocating Israeli membership in the EU.⁴³ In November 2002, the then Israeli foreign minister and former prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, declared that Israel favoured joining the EU and asked Italy to help Israel achieve this goal.⁴⁴ Likewise, Silvan Shalom stated in May 2003 that the Israeli government was weighing the possibility of applying for EU membership, adding that 'we will be glad to be accepted by the EU'.⁴⁵ Former Israeli Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami also expressed such views.

It is quite amazing that such senior Israeli policy-makers and others, who are familiar with the EU, cling to what can best be explained as wishful thinking.

⁴² Dahaf Institute, *Appendix: Tables of Distributions of Responses – Israeli's Attitudes Towards the European Union* (Dahaf Institute, Tel Aviv, 2004), p. 60, available on the website of the Delegation of the EU Commission to Israel, <www.eu-del.org.il/english/dahaf_second_poll_tables_of_results.doc>, accessed 15 March 2005.

⁴³ The manifesto is available at <www.radicalparty.org/welcome2.html>, accessed 15 March 2005.

⁴⁴ Reported by Israeli Military Radio, 9 November 2002; see also Sharon Sadeh, 'Israel? In the EU?', *Haaretz*, 10 December 2002 (in Hebrew).

⁴⁵ 'Foreign Affairs Minister of Israel to the European Parliament Delegation: "I Don't Exclude the Formal Request to Become a Member of the EU"', *Transnational Radical Party*, 19 May 2003; See also Martin Walker, 'Analysis: Israel Weighing EU Membership', *United Press International*, 21 May 2003.

We should also emphasize that there are voices in the EU that support such thinking. Among them, for instance, is the Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi who for several years has been advocating Israel's EU accession. In 2004 Berlusconi declared yet again that 'Italy will support Israeli membership in the EU. . . . As far as Italy is concerned, Israel is completely European in terms of standard of living, heritage and cultural values. Geography is not a determinant.'⁴⁶ The Transnational Radical Party of the EU Parliament is also a supporter of this misperception and for several years has run a campaign for full Israeli membership of the EU.⁴⁷

These views ignore fundamental incongruities between the nature of Israel as a Jewish state and the State of the Jewish People on one hand and the guiding principle of the EU to become an open and unified space without sharp distinctions between citizens of Member States in terms of 'insiders' and 'others' on the other hand. However democratic and liberal Israel is and however much universal human values are part of its spirit, its reality and aspirations as a Jewish state and the State of the Jewish People make it 'exceptional' and 'radically different'⁴⁸ from other states.⁴⁹ This difference prevents Israel joining the EU even if invited to do so,⁵⁰ while giving up this uniqueness would undermine the very *raison d'être* of Israel.

It is easy to give concrete illustrations, such as the contradiction between the Law of Return and the EU principle of freedom of movement of persons, even if realized in phases. One can add many further factors, such as the desire of Israel to play a major role in assuring the thriving of the Jewish people as a whole, that do not fit into EU values and institutions.

On the different level of realpolitik, Israel is not regarded by EU officials as a serious candidate for joining in the foreseeable future. As explained by Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations and the European Neighbourhood Policy: 'in the context of the

⁴⁶ Hadas Manor, 'Berlusconi: Italy will Support Israeli EU Membership', *Globes*, 3 October 2004 (in Hebrew).

⁴⁷ See the Transnational Radical Party campaign, 'Israel in the European Union Now', <www.radicalparty.org/welcome2.html>, accessed 15 March 2005.

⁴⁸ An important differentiation between 'ordinary' and radical difference is worked out in Carl R. Hausman, *A Discourse on Novelty and Creation* (2nd edn, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1984).

⁴⁹ For a comparative work on Israel as a Jewish state and/or the State of the Jewish People and the family of nations see Alexander Jakobson and Amnon Rubinstein, *Israel and the Family of Nations. Jewish Nation-State and Human Rights* (Schocken Publishing House Ltd, Tel Aviv, 2003, in Hebrew).

⁵⁰ However we should mention that there are some Israeli politicians who do not agree with this opinion. Dr Yossi Beilin, former Israeli Justice Minister and the current leader of the Meretz-Yahad Party, holds that if Israel does eventually join the EU, 'Europe would find the way' to accommodate this fundamental incongruity: statements in several public gatherings and meetings, Israel, Brussels and Berlin, 2004–2005.

European Neighbourhood Policy we still have a lot of work to bring Israel and the European Union closer . . . as for the question of [Israel] EU membership – this question is not on the agenda!’⁵¹

With all this in mind, further elaboration is not needed to justify the view that aspiring and hoping for Israeli membership in the EU in the foreseeable future is a serious misconception. Recognizing that Israel will not and should not try to become a member of the EU – rather than developing and increasing cooperation agreements – is therefore a basic starting point for a grand strategy in respect to the EU. This position may need reconsideration in the longer run, depending on the development of the EU and its constitution. But we regard our starting postulate as correct at least for the first half of the twenty-first century and probably longer.

No less erroneous and much more damaging is the opposite misconception: that good political relations with the EU are not really critical for Israel. For instance, in December 2004, during a briefing with the Israeli ambassadors to Europe, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon demanded that the Israeli ambassadors tell the Europeans that ‘we do not owe anyone [i.e. the Europeans] anything. We are obligated only to God!’⁵²

In addition, although Israeli policy-makers are aware of the importance of the EU to Israel, many of them think that the special relationship with the USA can fully compensate for political disagreements with the EU and that the USA can be relied upon in the foreseeable future. In the above-mentioned survey of Israeli public opinion towards the EU, more than two thirds (68 per cent) of people polled considered relations with the USA as more important than relations with the EU, while only 6 per cent considered relations with the EU as more important, and about one-quarter (26 per cent) thought that both relations are equally important.⁵³

Neither what are perceived, in part rightly so, as anti-Israeli EU policies, nor trust in the USA, which may be exaggerated, can justify the conclusion that relations with the EU are less than critical for the future of Israel.

Undoubtedly, the current constitutional crisis in Europe has lowered the Union’s international status and is a serious blow to its foreign policy capabilities.⁵⁴ In the short term, the most obvious consequences of this crisis

⁵¹ Adar Primor, ‘EU Commissioner for External Relations: We Will Take Advantage of the Improvement of Relations with the USA for a Deeper Involvement of the EU in the Peace Process’, *Haaretz*, 8 February 2005 (in Hebrew).

⁵² Itamar Eichner, ‘An Advocacy Lesson: At a Jerusalem Conference Sharon Demanded from the Ambassadors to Europe: “Do not be Afraid of Anyone”’, *Yediot Ahronoth*, 29 December 2004, p. 19 (in Hebrew).

⁵³ Note 39 above, p. 24.

⁵⁴ If eventually ratified, the new European Constitution (‘Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe’, *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2004/C310/01, 16 December 2004) will provide a strong basis for strengthening the EU as a global actor. ‘The Constitution presents

include weakening pressure on Israel as well as decreasing demands on the USA to become more 'even-handed' in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.⁵⁵ But as for the long term, the consequences remain less certain. Not only does the Israeli economy and significant parts of its research and technology depend on cooperation with the EU, but the EU standing in global affairs,⁵⁶ in security policies,⁵⁷ not to mention its desire to be more involved in the Middle East,⁵⁸ are likely to remain strong. Taking into account migration, together with the confrontation of terror, the EU will also become more active in relations with Islam.

Furthermore, cooperation between the USA and the EU is quite sure to improve, because of shared interests even when not always seen as such, including on the Middle East.⁵⁹ As US President Bush told European leaders: 'our strong friendship is essential to peace and prosperity across the globe. . . . Our greatest opportunity and immediate goal is peace in the Middle East. . . . The future of our nations, and the future of the Middle East, are linked, and our peace depends on their hope and development and freedom.'⁶⁰

For all these reasons, Ambassador Oded Eran, Israel Ambassador to the European Communities and Institutions, recommended that the 'Israelis have to recognize that Europe has legitimate interests in the region. . . . The EU is fast becoming a political and not just an economic actor in the international arena. . . . What I think is needed above all is a quiet and intimate dialogue

a critical new step in the development of the EU: what the Maastricht Treaty did for the euro, the Constitution could do for Europe's role in the world', Javier Solana, 'The Future of the European Union as an International Actor', available on the website of YES (Young Europeans for Security), <www.yes-dk.dk>, accessed 23 March 2005. The full text of the Constitution is available on the Constitution for Europe website at <europa.eu.int/>, accessed 6 August 2005.

⁵⁵ For a discussion of the EU constitutional crisis, the Middle East and Israel, see Manfred Gerstenfeld, 'The EU Constitutional Crisis, the Middle East and Israel', *Jerusalem Issue Brief*, 4(25), 26 June 2005, also available at <www.jcpa.org/brief/brief004-25.htm>, accessed 27 June 2005; Bitterlemons-International, 'The EU Crisis and the Middle East', 27(3), 21 July 2005, available at <www.bitterlemons-international.org/> accessed 21 July 2005.

⁵⁶ See, Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler, *The European Union as a Global Actor* (2nd edn, Routledge, London, 2005).

⁵⁷ See Javier Solana, 'A Secure Europe in A Better World – European Security Strategy', The Council of the European Union, Brussels, 12 December 2003. The Security Strategy is also available at <ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>, accessed 18 March 2005.

⁵⁸ See literature listed in note 26 above.

⁵⁹ See, for instance, Werner Weidenfeld et. al., *From Alliance to Coalitions: The Future of Transatlantic Relations* (Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers, Guetersloh, 2004); and Timothy Garton Ash, *Free World: Why the Crisis of the West Reveals the Opportunity of Our Time* (Allen Lane, London, 2004).

⁶⁰ 'Remarks by President George W. Bush', Concert Noble, Brussels, 21 February 2005. The text is also available on the website of the US Mission to the EU at <www.useu.be/TransAtlantic/Feb2105BushSpeechConcertNoble.html>, accessed 18 March 2005.

between Israel and the EU to ensure that Europe's potential contribution can be fully benefited from.⁶¹

Thus, the EU should be regarded by Israel as a major global actor bordering on the Middle East that is sure to play a significant role, for better or worse, in shaping the political-strategic future of Israel. Thus much more strenuous efforts by Israel to improve its relations with the EU are a must.

However, here the third misconception enters the picture, namely the image that anti-Israeli attitudes and geostrategic views detrimental to the security of Israel have deep roots in the EU. And that, therefore, efforts to improve political relations will probably fail.

This misperception is reinforced, however incorrectly, by a widespread image, also in significant parts of the Israeli policy elite, that large parts of the EU are antisemitic; and the increasingly revealed history of facilitation of the *Shoah* by many European countries, by action and non-action. Indeed the survey of Israeli public opinion towards the EU reveals that almost two-thirds (64 per cent) of those surveyed agreed with the claim that the EU positions towards Israel is antisemitism thinly disguised as moral principles.⁶²

It is true that a lot of action by the EU and its Member States provides a strong empiric basis for the view that under present circumstances not much can be done to help improve Israeli political relations with the EU without paying too high a price in terms of Israeli values and security. As previously mentioned, the recent EU voting patterns in the United Nations General Assembly reinforce this opinion. But one of the few clear lessons from history is that policies of countries and other international actors change with time and that other countries can play a role in bringing about such changes. Furthermore, in the EU there is disagreement on parts of Middle East policy and on attitudes to Israel, increasing probabilities of influencing EU policy as a whole with the help of suitable policies.

To be added is a different argument: If Israel had acted optimally to improve political relations with the EU without compromising its core values and interest yet failed to achieve impacts, then there would be a strong factual basis for the opinion that EU policies towards Israel are deeply rooted and rigid and nothing much can be done about them, at least for the time being. But this is clearly not the case, with Israel lacking a well-crafted grand strategy on relating to the EU, investing relatively small resources in liaison with the EU, and making plenty of errors causing ill will.

Pulling the analysis together, two alternative conclusions, with the same practical prescription, seem justified: Either it is quite likely that relations with the EU can be significantly improved, or one cannot know if this is

⁶¹ 'The Role of the EU in the Middle East – Remarks by Ambassador Oded Eran', The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, Jerusalem, 10 January 2005.

⁶² See note 39 above, p. 41.

possible without trying in earnest. For both conjectures the recommendation is the same: Israel should make much more of an effort to improve political relations with the EU.

V Deep Disagreements and EU Misconceptions

Improving political relations would be relatively easy where disagreements between the EU and Israel are superficial. Allowing EU leadership of major regional economic endeavours, acknowledging the role of the EU in the Quartet, giving a little more or less weight to the EU in guarding the Roadmap, avoiding some offending Israeli remarks and so on – these are simple steps not hard to take. However, there are deep disagreements between Israel and the EU in world views, mental sets, cultural assumptions and understandings of reality.⁶³ Furthermore, many of these disagreements reflect serious misconceptions by the EU (which are sure to cause much damage to the EU too), making them all the harder for Israel to correct.

Particularly serious and insidious are eight deep disagreements which, in part, also constitute serious misconceptions by the EU:

- *If Israel would withdraw from nearly all the occupied territories in which a Palestinian state would then be established, a stable peace is likely. A significant Israeli withdrawal is inevitable and constitutes a preferable (in the sense of least bad) choice for Israel, as increasingly agreed by Israeli heads of government, large parts of the policy elite and a growing proportion of the Israeli public. But the scope and form of withdrawal and related security arrangements depend a lot on expectations on the stability of the emerging Palestinian state and the Middle East, as well as on agreements concerning the sensitive and very difficult issues of refugees and Jerusalem, as well as on linkages with relations with other Arab state.*

In these matters, Israeli and EU views diverge, with Israel being very aware of the instability of the Middle East and the doubtful viability and peaceful nature of a Palestinian state, in contrast to optimistic EU expectations.

In our view, mainstream Israeli evaluations are right in this matter while the EU position is a misconception that ignores all that is known on the socio-economic, religious and political dynamics of the Middle East. Unexpected shifts for the better cannot be excluded, but to base on them policies is reckless.

⁶³ See, for instance, Manfred Gerstenfeld, *Israel and Europe: An Expanding Abyss?* (Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Jerusalem, 2005); Gisela Dachs and Joel Peters, *Israel and Europe, the Troubled Relationship: Between Perceptions and Reality* (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Tel-Aviv, 2004).

- *The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a main cause of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism.* Related to the misconception above is the EU belief that settling the Palestinian issue will significantly reduce Islamic hostility and terrorist attacks towards the West in general and Europe in particular. As Javier Solana has put it: ‘After the dreadful attacks in London, our efforts to secure peace in the Middle East have become even more important. We must resolve this conflict if we want to put a stop to terrorism.’⁶⁴ Consistently, a European public opinion survey conducted by the European Commission in October 2003 reported that 59 per cent of the respondents saw Israel as not just an obstacle to peace in the Middle East but as ‘the greatest threat to world peace’.⁶⁵

While some such effects are likely, Islamic fundamentalism and its hostility towards the West,⁶⁶ including Europe of course, has much deeper causes and is likely to continue and also to escalate, in spite of any Israeli-Palestinian accommodation – which, whatever is agreed, will be rejected and regarded as ‘treason’ by fundamentalist extremists who will react by trying to escalating terror.

This is a very deep disagreement which shapes all EU policies towards Israel, the Middle East and global geostrategic issues. As long as it lasts, an improvement of relations between Israel and the EU will be very difficult. However, when an accommodation between Israel and the Palestinians is reached, however partial and temporary, or if some event pushes the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians out of the main EU policy agenda, this disagreement will be less crucial and improvements in relations between Israel and the EU will become easier, leaving this misconception aside or going around it.

- *Israel should be a ‘normal’ Western state.* A more fundamental misconception is the EU view that Israel is and should be and behave as other Western democratic countries. This is perhaps the deepest disagreement and the

⁶⁴ Editor, ‘EU Official Urges Mideast Peace Efforts After London Blasts’, *Der Spiegel*, 11 July 2005, p. 129 (in German). The English text is also available at <www.rednova.com>, accessed 11 July 2005.

⁶⁵ Flash Eurobarometer, ‘Iraq and Peace in the World – Full Report 151’, European Commission, Brussels, 2003. The survey is also available on the European Commission website at <europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/iraq/doc/fl151_iraq_full_report.pdf>, accessed 20 March 2005.

⁶⁶ Especially pertinent are explanations of Islamic fundamentalism as, paradoxically, a result of modernization; and of Islamic anti-Western attitudes as rooted in the history of Western victories over Islamic countries and radical cultural differences. See: S. N. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism, Sectarianism, and Revolution: The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999); Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies* (Penguin Press, New York, 2004); and Akbar S. Ahmed, *Islam Under Siege: Living Dangerously in a Post-Honor World* (Polity Press, Cambridge, 2003).

most erroneous of all EU misconceptions. It ignores the radical uniqueness of Israel – built by Zionism – as constituting a Jewish democratic state and regarding itself as the State of the Jewish People.

Viewing Israel as a normal state in line with the Western European model also ignores its unique geostrategic situation as a border country between the Arab world on one side and Europe on the other, a situation which poses existential dangers having no parallel in the EU and requiring therefore security measures hard to understand and accept by the EU.

Improving the understanding of Israel by the EU is therefore a *sine qua non* for upgrading relations, all the more so as the EU misconception of the very nature and spirit of Israel produces or reinforces most of the deep disagreements and results in EU demands and policies unacceptable to Israel.

- *Incomprehension of the nature of Israel as the core state of the Jewish People.* As mentioned, Israel regards itself as the State of the Jewish People, an idea which is basic to Judaism and central to Zionism. While in some respects the relations between Israel and the Jewish people living in other countries can be compared to the relations between other home lands and their diasporas,⁶⁷ they are unique in their value bases, history and contemporary realities.

Thus Israel regards itself responsible for the safety of Jews all over the world, deliberately discriminates in favor of Jews in its immigration policies, is very active in worldwide networks of the Jewish people, will take a more active role in claiming reparations and restitutions,⁶⁸ and is considering ways to formally consult Jewish People leaders and institutions in Israeli decisions having significant impacts on the Jewish People as a whole.⁶⁹

All this is hard to understand and even harder to accept for the EU.

- *Public international law provides norms which are obligatory for Israel.* More concrete is the EU expectation and demand that Israel should act according to the present norms of public international law and respect the opinions of international courts, tribunals and other international organizations.

⁶⁷ See the unique but in our view incorrect treatment in Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003).

⁶⁸ This may cause increasing tensions with EU Member States who often are very reluctant to meet demands for full restitutions and reparations, for instance in respect to real estate and objects of art. See, Stuart Eizenstat, *Imperfect Justice* (Public Affairs Press, New York, 2004).

⁶⁹ Very significant is the initiative by the President of the State of Israel to set up a Jewish People Council as a kind of consultative second chamber of the Israeli Parliament. See 'Jewish People Global Forum', The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, Jerusalem, 2005, available on the JPPPI website at <www.jpppi.org.il/>, accessed 30 March 2005.

But Israel does not do so and the famous comment, made in the mid-1950s by Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, *UM-Shmum*,⁷⁰ still colours Israel's foreign policy. As a matter of fact Israel cannot do so without endangering its security and fundamental values. This is clearly a cause for serious disagreements, both on the level of principle and of specific actions.

For sure Israel can and should take public international law and humanitarian law more into account, as is being done increasingly. But the deep disagreement stems from what is regarded as a major EU misconception, namely taking present public international law as a given which has to be applied, never mind changes in circumstances. This is so even though the rule of international law is currently in a state of a severe crisis and it sorely lags behind reality and requires meaningful reforms.

Without going here into the relations between social change and law in general and between forms of conflict and laws of war in particular,⁷¹ new security dangers require significant and in part radical innovations in international law and in the balance between human rights collective-security safety.⁷² A fateful illustration is the escalating ability of fewer and fewer to kill more and more with rapidly increasing cost-kill-effectiveness combined with proliferating atrocious fundamentalism, which cannot be contained and reduced without new international norms.

Israel (and the Jewish People as a whole) are prime targets of such and other novel forms of attack and therefore have no choice but to pioneer development and application of new norms fitting the threat.⁷³ The USA, following the 11 September 2001 attacks, has reached a similar conclusion.

But after the March 2004 Madrid bombings, resulting the appointment of Mr Gijs de Vries as the first EU Anti-Terrorism Coordinator⁷⁴ and even after the July 2005 London blasts, the EU is still lagging behind, despite increasing exposure to novel forms of mass killings. Europe considers the fight against terrorism as a matter of law enforcement and does not yet recognize its much broader dimension.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ An Israeli derogatory reference to the United Nations. *UM* is the Hebrew acronym for UN, and meaning in effect, 'the UN is nothing'.

⁷¹ For an original and very pertinent historic treatment see Philip Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace, and the Course of History* (Knopf, New York, 2002).

⁷² See also Kofi Annan, 'In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All', Report of the Secretary General A/59/2005, United Nations, 21 March 2005. The report is also available on the UN website at <www.un.org/largerfreedom/report-largerfreedom.pdf>, accessed 21 March 2005.

⁷³ See Yehezkel Dror, 'Confronting Atrocious Evil', *Midstream*, January 2003, pp. 18–20.

⁷⁴ A new post designed to boost cooperation between EU Member States in the fight against terrorism.

⁷⁵ Marc Cogen, 'The West, Europe and the Islam', The Center for the Study of European

The result is a deep disagreement with Israel related to what we regard as a very serious lag of EU images of reality behind ruptures in human history which require proportional shifts in global norms.

- *Israeli reactions to Palestinian violence have to be ‘proportional’, hurt only the perpetrators of terrorist acts and should avoid collective damage as by the separation fence.* To continue on a concrete level, a good illustration if provided by the EU demand that Israeli actions follow a narrow interpretation of the Geneva Conventions which, in the experience of Israel, does not meet the novel forms of attack to which Israel is subject. Thus, suicidal mass-killing terrorism cannot be reduced by proportional reactions. Life-saving preemptive killing of terrorists, their commanders and suppliers carries unavoidable risks of hurting bystanders. And protecting the Israeli population, wherever they are, requires, in the opinion of nearly all Israeli security experts, – unless a stable peace is achieved very soon and the Palestinian state effectively prevents terror attacks on Israel – a security fence going often beyond the pre-Six-Day-War borders. This is imposing a heavy burden on Palestinians not directly involved in anti-Israeli action, though due proportions between costs and benefits in terms of human suffering should be assured (as decided by the Israeli Supreme Court in its judgment regarding the security fence).⁷⁶

It is hard to escape the impression that the EU position in these matters is based, consciously or implicitly, on the opinion that Israel should withdraw from all the occupied territories and thus assure peaceful co-existence and an end to terror, leading us back to a deep disagreement discussed above. But this aggravated rather than ameliorates the significance of the presently discussed disagreement.

- *US unilateralism and ‘new sovereigntism’ is wrong and dangerous and US support of Israel is a grave mistake.* Expanding on the disagreements discussed above is the EU position that US unilateralism and new sovereigntism⁷⁷ is inherently wrong, coupled with the EU view that US

Politics and Society, Working Paper No. 1, Beer Sheva, 2005, also available at <hsf.bgu.ac.il/europe/files/csepspmc.pdf>, accessed 6 August 2005; see also Daniel Keohane, *The EU and Counter-Terrorism* (Centre for European Reforms, London, 2005). For a short brief and a collection of the EU official documents on the Union’s anti-terrorism policy see EurActiv.com – EU News, Policy Positions & EU Actors Online, available at <www.euractiv.com/>, accessed 6 August 2005.

⁷⁶ HCJ 2056/04, *Beit Sourik Village Council v. The Government of Israel*. The English text of the HCJ judgment is also available at <securityfence.mfa.gov.il/mfm/Data/55414.pdf> , accessed 20 March 2005.

⁷⁷ For these concepts and their criticism see Peter J. Spiro, ‘The New Sovereigntists: American Exceptionalism and Its False Prophets’ (2000) 79/6 *Foreign Affairs*, as further discussed in Peter J. Spiro, ‘What Happened to the “New Sovereigntism”?’ (2004) July 28 (author update) *Foreign Affairs*.

support for Israel is mistaken. Obviously Israel is of a radically different opinion, agreeing with US positions and policies and eager for US support.

However there is more to this deep disagreement: It is based on an overall reality image of the EU which is different from the Israeli one, with the EU reality image being in Israel's view dangerously wrong. This brings us to the next and last deep disagreement, which sums up all of them.

- *'Readiness to kill and be killed' is an obsolete and dangerous attitude and the use of violence as an instrument of policy is evil. Both are not tolerated by the public and are unnecessary, with few exceptions, in a world on the way to 'Eternal Peace'*. Kagan coined the famous expression that the 'Europeans are from Venus',⁷⁸ namely the EU views of the world tend to be optimistic, while recognizing some dangers but regarding them as temporary, local and susceptible to solution by mainly peaceful means. Correlated is the lack of readiness of EU citizens to risk their lives for what are seen as remote and doubtful causes and the inability or unwillingness of EU Member States to increase defence budgets as necessary to make the EU a major global actor in hard (and not only soft) power.

It is easy to explain this honorable image of reality. After the terrible experience of the two worlds wars and in the middle of the positive experience of building the European Union as a new polity sure to prevent war between its members, trust in an approaching 'End of History' takes the place of realpolitik – the bitter results of which are in the minds of all. Trust in negotiations and ultimate compromises based on common interests take the place of the threat or use of force, with some exceptions of humanitarian interventions where too the behaviour of European units demonstrates little readiness to kill and be killed to save the lives of the innocent entrusted to them.

The trouble is that this reality image is very doubtful, to put it mildly, in light of the historic experiences of the Jewish People and of Israel. Israeli doubts about a good world rapidly in the making have regretfully been validated by global and regional developments, such as nuclear proliferation and threats by 'crazy states'⁷⁹ and atrocious terror – which are at least as likely to lead within the foreseeable future to a 'Global Leviathan'⁸⁰ as to a peaceful world. Experience with the Palestinian rejection of the far-

⁷⁸ Robert Kagan, *Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (Atlantic Books, London, 2003), p. 3. Garton Ash expresses the contrary view, note 59 above.

⁷⁹ See Yehezkel Dror, *Crazy States: A Counterconventional Strategic Issue* (Heath, Lexington, 1971 (Kraus Reprints enlarged edition, 1980)).

⁸⁰ See Yehezkel Dror, *The Capacity to Govern* (Frank Cass, London, 2002), passim; and Yehezkel Dror, 'From My Perspective: Lucifer Smiles' (2002) 69/4 *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, pp. 431–435.

reaching Clinton–Barak plan⁸¹ provide additional hard data support for the more malignant rather than benign view of the foreseeable future of the Middle East and beyond.

All this adds up to quite an abyss between the mindsets and reality images of the EU and Israel. But before reaching this summation and proceeding from there to some principles for an Israeli grand strategy towards the EU, let us balance the evaluation by mentioning some additional Israeli misconceptions and relation-disturbing features.

VI Additional Israeli Misconceptions

Israeli decision-makers suffer from serious misconceptions additional to those already discussed. As illustrations from a larger set, let us mention five Israeli doubtful – and in part clearly wrong – perceptions, with some variations, as accepted by different Israeli policy-makers. Such Israeli misconceptions underpin disagreements with the EU and, even more dangerously, distort much of Israeli policy thinking, decision-making and action:

1. A temporary and partial agreement with the Palestinians leaving for later the refugee and Jerusalem issue is viable. Or, alternatively, a temporary and partial agreement is achievable and sustainable for quite some time, instead of the full Roadmap;
2. The special relationship with the USA and US broad-spectrum support are sure to continue in the foreseeable future;
3. Whatever Israel gives up, continuous multi-dimensional violent conflict with Arab and Islamic states and non-state actors is likely with agreements being fragile. Or, alternatively, giving up nearly all the territories taken during the Six Day War will result in a stable and reliable peace;
4. Peace with Syria is not really important and related difficult decisions on withdrawal from large parts of the Golan Heights can be avoided without long-term high costs in terms of Israeli-Arab relations;
5. International pressures can be resisted given strong will and good nerves, without too high a price.

Further discussion of these and other Israeli misperceptions impacting for the worse on relations with the EU is beyond the scope of this paper, all the more so as their correction leads far beyond crafting a grand strategy

⁸¹ The best description and analysis is provided in Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2004). The fact that the EU did not play any real role in this process is significant.

towards the EU.⁸² But one conclusion should be emphasized: The blame for bad political relations between the EU and Israel falls on both sides. But, according to our readings of history and the present realities and dynamics, the EU suffers at present from more serious misconceptions than do mainstream Israeli policy-makers, many of whom are in the process of a substantial re-evaluation of traditional attitudes,⁸³ while the EU learning curve appears still in its infancy.

VII Partly Different World Views

To sum up, on some crucial matters Israeli and EU decision-makers and publics at large live and act with quite different world views. Their *Weltanschauungen* diverge and their social imaginary⁸⁴ in part radically differ from one another. At the same time, Israel is in many respects a part of Western civilization and shares with the EU many fundamental values, reality perceptions⁸⁵ and also realpolitical interests. Most important for the long-term future of Israeli-EU relations and giving cause to optimism is the EU desire to assure the existence of a secure Israeli state within a peaceful Middle East⁸⁶ and associated closely with the EU, however intense the disagreements on how to get there.

This mixture of differences and communalities pose the main challenge to an Israeli grand strategy towards the EU.

VIII Conclusions: Some Principles for an Israeli Grand Strategy towards the EU

Based on the analysis above, together with application of main approaches

⁸² For an even broader perspective of present 'capacities to govern' as inadequate for coping for complex problems, including global and regional security issues see Yehezkel Dror, *The Capacity to Govern*, note 80 above.

⁸³ A striking illustration is the statement by Israeli Prime Minister Sharon that parts of the settlement policy in the occupied territory were a strategic mistake.

⁸⁴ This apt concept is well presented in Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Duke University Press, Durham, 2004).

⁸⁵ However, the idea of Europe having a Judeo-Christian civilization is misleading in underrating the radical differences between Judaism and Christianity. See, for instance, Rosemarin Trude Weiss, *Judaism and Christianity: The Difference* (Jonathan David, Middle Village, NY, 1997, first published 1943); and Tsvi Bisk and Moshe Dror, *Futurizing the Jews: Alternative Futures for Meaningful Jewish Existence in the 21st Century* (Praeger, Westport, CT, 2003), ch. 10.

⁸⁶ Nevertheless, Ambassador Oded Eran, Israeli Ambassador to the European Communities institutions, believes that 'when it comes to their security, maybe the last ones from whom Israelis would seek advice are the Europeans' (Oded Eran, note 61 above, p.3).

to crafting grand strategies,⁸⁷ the following eighteen principles for an Israeli grand strategy towards the EU are tentatively proposed:

1. Realize the crucial importance of relations with the EU for the future of Israel;
2. Recognize and explicate shared long-term interests;
3. Give high priority to improving relations with the EU, including investing larger resources and avoiding unessential irritating acts;
4. Understand better EU values, interests and world views;
5. Put relations with the EU into the context of other Israeli grand strategies, such as those towards the USA, China, Islam and global governance;⁸⁸
6. Move from debate on current issues to clarification of fundamental disagreements, with efforts to change some EU perceptions and world views, in part instead of futile ‘public relations’;⁸⁹
7. Reduce Israeli misconceptions concerning the EU and issues in debate with the EU;
8. Strive to cooperate with the EU on global issues, such as ecological concerns, dangers of a clash of cultures, and the revision of international law – also at United Nations forums;
9. Map shared strategic interests and offer more cooperation in advancing EU political and security objectives (as long as these do not contradict main Israeli needs), including shared intelligence and contingency planning;
10. Initiate shared professional discourse on the long-range future of the Middle East and on global geostrategy as a whole;
11. Be more elastic in enabling and also encouraging closer EU involvement in Middle East peace processes, subject to safeguarding essential Israeli interests;
12. Formally consult the EU on major Israeli initiatives, unless secrecy is of the essence;
13. Strengthen the socio-cultural policy dimension in relations with the EU;
14. Delicately explicate the risk to the EU of neglecting the critical security needs of Israel, such as action against proliferation of weapons of mass killing (WMK) and of pushing Israel into a corner, including the possibility of mega-conflicts in the Middle East with much collateral damage to EU areas;

⁸⁷ As detailed in Yehezkel Dror (1998), note 2 above.

⁸⁸ This raises the need for multi-dimensional grand-strategic Israeli thinking, which goes beyond present political and institutional capacities.

⁸⁹ Interesting to try and apply is Howard Gardner, *Changing Minds: The Art and Science of Changing Our Own and Other People's Minds* (Harvard Business School Press, Boston, 2004).

15. Facilitate, in non-provocative ways, the upgrading of Jewish soft power in the EU;⁹⁰
16. Insist on the higher moral ground of Israel in respect to the Palestinians, in view of the history of far-going compromises offered by Israel and rejected by the Palestinians;
17. Persist in demanding European support as a moral duty of theirs following the *Shoah*;
18. Craft the Israeli grand strategy towards the EU in close conjunction with the crafting of Israeli grand strategies on other crucial issues, such as relations with China⁹¹ and postures towards Islamic actors, so as to assure mutual consistency and positive interaction.⁹²

In view of the deep bases of disagreements between Israel and the EU, relying on ad hoc action, changes in the personal composition of the EU bodies, personal chemistry, better public relations, good luck, etc., is clearly not enough. Whether on line with the proposed principles or others, Israel has to craft urgently a grand strategy towards the EU. The EU too should significantly improve its grand-strategic thinking. But this is a task for the EU to consider, while development and implementation of an Israeli grand strategy, aimed at improving relations and upgrading cooperation with the EU also in political and security matters, is a task awaiting Israeli decision-makers, strategic thinkers and professionals. However, to engage in high-quality grand-strategy crafting and its implementation, – argued in this paper as being essential for the future of Israel – significant changes to the Israeli political system and machinery of government are required. But this is a subject for another article.

⁹⁰ See Sharon Pardo, note 31 above.

⁹¹ See Shalom Salomon Wald, *China and the Jewish People: Old Civilizations in a New Era* (Gefen Publishing House, Jerusalem, 2004).

⁹² This requires taking into account global developments as a whole, such as discussed in National Intelligence Council, 'Mapping the Global Future: Report of the National Intelligence Council's 2020 Report', Washington, GPO, December 2004, also available at <www.cia.gov/nic/NIC_globaltrend2020.html>, accessed 17 April 2005; and in Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2005).

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